

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 XMB-02

OC-05 CCO-00 PER-01 A-01 OPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /070 W

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O R 150829Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3655

INFO AMCONGEN ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3080

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: GUERRILLAS INVEST LALIBELA: SITREP MORNING MARCH 15.

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3074

1. AT 1030 HOURS LOCAL MARCH 15 SITUATION LALIBELA APPEARS TO BE AS FOLLOWS:

A. AT 0800 LALIBELA WAS QUIET. INSURGENTS HAD WITHDRAWN TO SURROUNDING HILLS. SOME MINOR LOOTING WAS IN PROGRESS. THERE NO SIGN OF POLICE OR REGULAR TROOPS. STORY OF PARA DROP APPARENTLY FALSE ALTHOUGH IT CONCEIVABLE THAT OUR INFORMANTS IN TOWN NOT FULLY AWARE OF SITUATION AT AIRPORT SEVERAL MILES AWAY.

B. AMERICANS ARE SAFE AND UNHURT. WE ARE IN RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH THEM. AT APPROX. 0830 HOURS THEY REPORTED RETURN OF INSURGENT ELEMENTS TO OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN INCLUDING HOTEL AREA WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED AND HELIPAD. STILL NO SIGN OF GOVERNMENTALS.

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C. ACCORDING OUR AMERICAN INFORMANTS BURNED OUT DC-3 AT END OF

RUNWAY WHICH CUT BY THREE "DEEP TRENCHES" PRECLUDING LANDING BY ANY FIXED WING AIRCRAFT. ROAD INTO LALIBELA SAID TO BE "CUT".
OUR INFORMANTS ESTIMATE THAT GROUND FORCE WOULD REQUIRE MINIMUM OF 3 DAYS TO REACH THEM OVERLAND.

D. AT APPM1000 HOURS LOCAL OUR INFORMANTS ADVISED BY RADIO THAT NAMED "NUMBER 2 INSURGENT LEADER" HAD AGREED TO ALLOW CHOPPER IN TO REMOVE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED EAL FLIGHT ATTENDANT AS WELL AS FOREIGNERS. ACCORDINGLY, ETHIOPIAN AIR LINES IN COOPERATION WITH ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE IS ALERTING AIR FORCE ALOUETTE TO PROCEED WITH PICK UP. THAT CHOPPER NOW AT COMBOLCHA. EAL CHOPPER, WHICH HAS ROOM FOR ONE PASSENGER BESIDES SPACE FOR WOUNDED MAN, MADE ATTEMPT EARLIER THIS MORNING BUT ALTITUDE SUCH IT HAD TO TURN BACK BECAUSE OF LACK OF LIFT.

2. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE OBVIOUSLY SOME RISK PROCEED AT WORD OF UNIDENTIFIED "NUMBER 2" WE SEE NO BETTER ALTERNATIVE. GREATEST DANGER IS THAT SITUATION MAY DRAG AND HARDEN AND THAT INSURGENTS MAY DECIDE AT SOME POINT TO WITHDRAW INTO EXTREMELY RUGGED MOUNTAINS TAKING AMERICANS ALONG AS HOSTAGES AND SHIELDS.

3. WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED.
WYMAN

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NNN

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